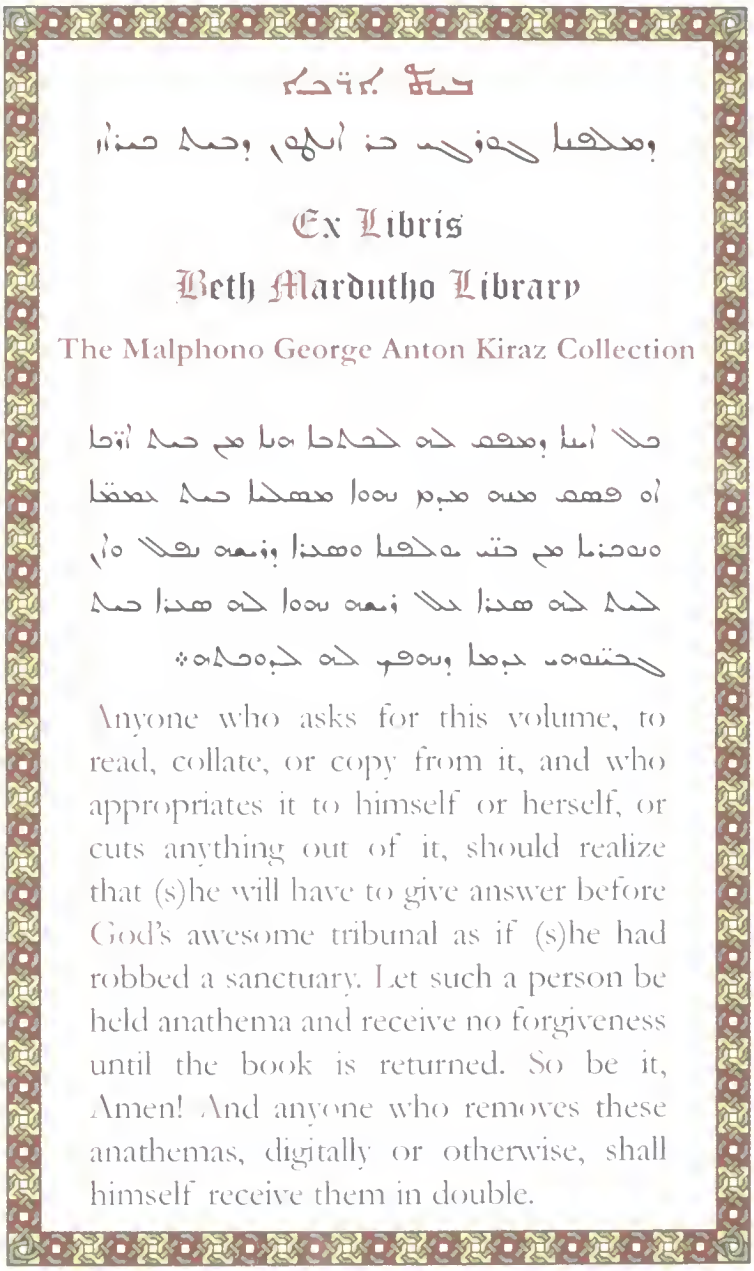
Catechism of Christian Doctrine

Prepared and Approved by the

HOLY SYNOD OF PATRIARCHAL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Anyone who asks for this volume, to read, collate, or copy from it, and who appropriates it to himself or herself, or cuts anything out of it, should realize that (s)he will have to give answer before God's awesome tribunal as if (s)he had robbed a sanctuary. Let such a person be held anathema and receive no forgiveness until the book is returned. So be it, Amen! And anyone who removes these anathemas, digitally or otherwise, shall himself receive them in double.

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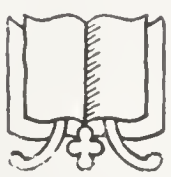

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Preface

In the Year of 1928 this Catechism was translated from Syriac to English by the Very Rev. Kuruakos of India at the request of Mr. Frances Emanuel Hoyon of Worcester, Mass. and for a nominal consideration was given to the Assyrian Apostolic Church of Virgin Mary, of West New York, Hudson Co., New Jersey.

The purpose of preparing and presenting this Catechism in its original state as translated in the English Language, is to educate the Youth of our Churches of the Orthodox and Apostolic Faith as was approved and prescribed by the Three Holy Synods of Niccia (A. D. 333), Constantinia - (A. D. 391), and Ephesos (A. D. 446).

There have been many Synods and changes made since the Year of 446, but they have not been followed in our Church Doctrines, as we believe the first Three Original Synods are the ones to be guided by.

This Church obligates itself to publish from time to time such Religious Books as may be necessary to further promote the Orthodox Faith.

ASSYRIAN PATRIARCH

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HIS EMINENCE

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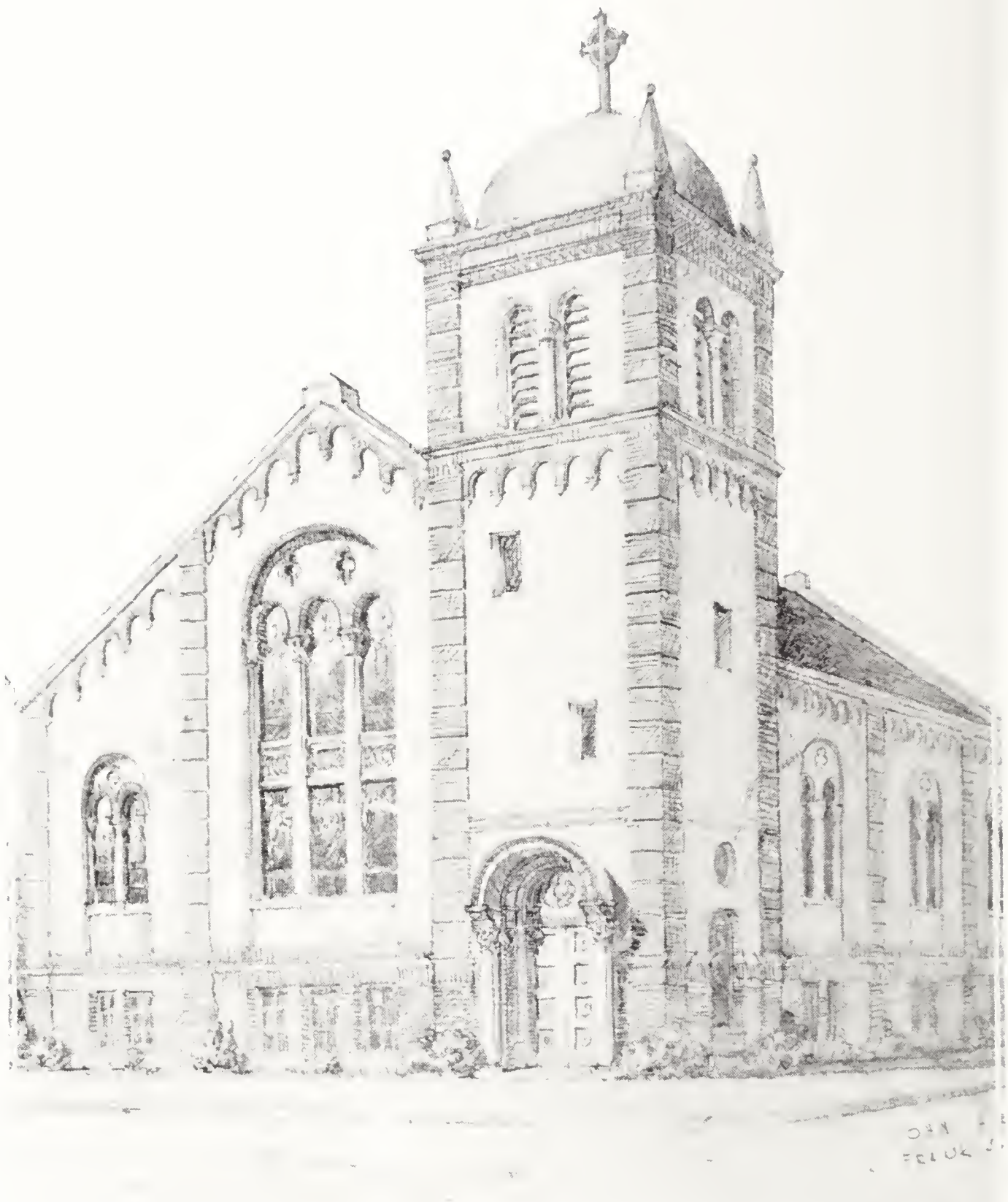

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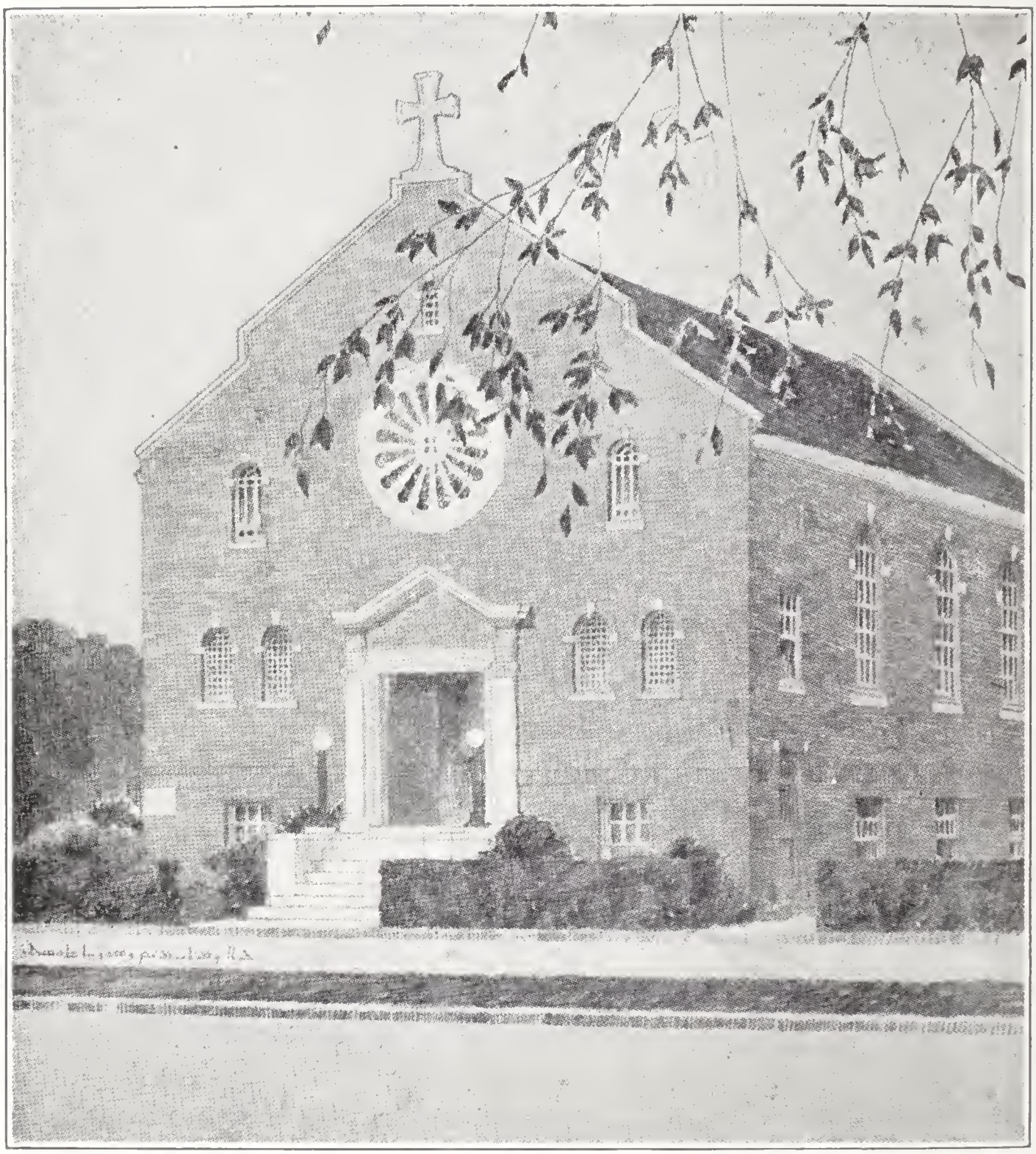

ASSYRIAN ST. MARY'S CHURCH
WORCESTER, MASS.

VERY REV. FAVLOS SAMUEL

RECTOR OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH
WORCESTER, MASS.

PRAYER

In the name of one True God, the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Glory be to Him and His mercy and kindness be on us for ever more. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy Glory. Hosanna in the Highest.

Blessed is He that hath come and is yet to come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the Highest.

Holy Art Thou, O God!
Holy Art Thou, O Almighty!
Holy Art Thou, O Immortal!

O Thou that wast crucified for us have mercy upon us.

O Lord have mercy upon us; O Lord have compassion and mercy upon us. O Lord accept our worship and our prayers, have mercy upon us.

Glory be to Thee O God
Glory be to Thee O Creator

O Christ, the King, who has compassion on Thy sinful servants, Glory be to Thee. Grant us Thy blessing O Lord.

Our Father. Amen.

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of Sabbath, Heaven and Earth are full of Thy glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord and whom shall come again.

Hosanna in the highest.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, Who art in Heaven; Hallowed by Thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we also forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For Thine is the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory, of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, now and always and for ever and ever. Amen.

THE APOSTLES CREED.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and Earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, the begotten from the Father before all the worlds, Light of light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, Consubstantial with the Father by whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and took on man:

and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, died and buried:

and the third day rose again according to his wish and desire.

And ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the Right Hand of the Father:

And He shall come again with great glory to judge the quick and the dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And We believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spake through the Prophets and Apostles.

And in one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and

We look for the Resurrection of the dead; and a new life in the world to come, Amen.

CONFESSION PRAYER

In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, the only true God. I the greatest of sinners confess my sins to the omniscient God, and before the Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, before Michael and Gabriel the supreme angels, before St. Peter and St. Paul, the Heads among the Apostles, before 72 Evangelists and before the Holy Fathers gathered in the Holy Synods of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus, in who faith I live and die and before thee my respected spiritual Father! I fully believe that what thou bindeth on earth would be bound in Heaven and what Thou looseth on earth would be loosed in Heaven. I Have sinned in thought, word and deed. I am a great sinner. Many, many are my sins. So I confess my sins before thee. Thou being mediator between God and myself, I humby pray mercy and forgiveness of sins through your mediation. O respected spiritual Father! absolve and bless me. Amen.

(This prayer is to be repeated while kneeling before the priest to confess one's sins.)

THE HOLY TRINITY

Who is God?

God is the Creator and Preserver of everything seen and unseen.

What is Trinity?

We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, being co-equal and co-eternal. They are three known persons, but only one God.

Who is Jesus Christ?

Christ is the second person in Trinity, who is perfect man and perfect God, incarnated for the salvation of mankind.

How did Christ Incarnate?

He became man by taking Human flesh and soul from Virgin Mary, through the operation of Holy Spirit, without Human co-operation.

What is the meaning of the word Jesus Christ?

'Jesus' means Saviour, and 'Christ' means annointed.

What was the Chief work of Our Lord in His Life time?

He lived for 33 years teaching the people, healing the sick and working miracles.

What did Lord Jesus do for Human Salvation?

He became man, was Baptized, fasted, prayed, suffered, died, rose from the dead and ascended to the Heavens.

Did He appear on earth after His Resurrection?

Yes. He appeared several times to His Apostles, during forty days, to convince them that the Resurrection is true.

What did He do on the fortieth day?

He ascended into the Heaven after giving His disciples all the necessary spiritual graces and promising them the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What does He do now?

He sits on the right hand of God the Father and intercedes for us, showing the Blood of His Sacrifice.

Will He come to the World again?

He will come to Judge the quick and the dead according to their deeds.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Who guided the apostles after the ascension?

They were guided by the Holy Spirit sent to them on the day of Penticost, as He promised them.

From whom does the Holy Spirit proceed?

He proceeds from the Father, St. John 15-26 14-16. "When the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father even the Spirit of Truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall bear witness of me."

What is the relation between God, Jesus and Holy Spirit?

God is Father, Jesus is Son, and the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father.

PRAYER

What is prayer?

Prayer is the lifting up of our hearts to God, to glorify Him, to praise Him for His mercies and to entreat Him for the necessities of the Body and Soul.

What should be your posture during prayer?

You should stand facing towards the east, reverentially, folding your hands on your breast and making the sign of the cross.

Why do you make the sign of the Cross when you pray?

To remember that Our Lord died on the cross and saved us and made us sons of the right (side), who were the sons of the left and also to consider the cross as the weapon of all success and symbol of salvation.

What should be your thought when you pray?

My mind should be concentrated, meditating upon what I pray, with (an act of) Love, Faith and Hope.

How many times should you pray daily?

Though we are to pray seven times a day, it is obligatory to pray thrice a day, in the morning, evening and at bed time.

FASTING

What is meant by Fasting?

It is a weapon to withstand the temptation of Satan and the passions of the flesh. It consists in abstaining from the pleasures of the table and the appetites of the Flesh and dedicating ourselves to God.

Which are the fasting seasons of the Church?

1. The lent of adventide for 24 days, begins on the 14th of December and ends on the 7th of January.
2. Lent of the Ninuvates for 3 days—18 days before the long lent.
3. The long lent—48 days including the Holy Week.
4. The lent of the Holy Apostles for 13 days begins on the 29th of June.
5. The lent of Our Blessed Virgin Mary—For 14 days begins on August 14th. And every Friday and Wednesday, excepting the Fridays and Wednesdays of the whitsontide, are fasting days.

How are we to observe these fasts?

We should abstain from meat, (fish) milk, curd cheese and marital pleasures on all the fast days. And during the long lent and that of the Ninuvate we should fast until noon.

Why should we abstain from Food on Fast days?

Because Our Lord abstained from food, while He fasted in the wilderness as a compensation for the sins of the First Parents through food.

SABBATH

What is meant by Sabbath?

This is the day on which God ordained that no work should be done, but must be kept Holy unto the Lord and which was Blessed and Hallowed by Him Exed. 20 10-11.

Why is the Sabbath observed on Sundays and not on Saturdays?

It is because Sunday is Our Lord's day, since on that day Our Lord Rose from the dead, the Apostles gathered together for worship and the Holy Spirit came down on them on Penticost.

How are we to observe the Sunday?

We should abstain from secular work and spend the day in charitable deeds, reading of devotional books and in prayer.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

What are the Ten Commandments?

1. I am the Lord Thy God. Thou shalt not have no other Gods beside me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor the likeness of anything that is in Heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down unto them nor serve them.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord Thy God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy.
5. Honour thy Father and Mother.
6. Thou shalt do no murder.
7. Thou shalt not commit Adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbors.
10. Thou shalt not covet anything that is thy neighbor's.

Who gave the ten commandments?

God himself gave the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and Christ, Our Lord, confirmed them.

Why should you keep the commandments?

I should keep the commandments to obtain eternal life.

How did Christ summarize these commandments?

Christ summarized them into two viz. (1) Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (2) Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. St. Matthew 22 37-39.

What are the Important Commandments of the Church?

The important Commandments of the Church are:

(1) You should attend the Eucharistic service on Sundays and other obligatory days.

(2) You should observe the 5 fasts of the Church.

(3) You should abstain from meat, milk, cheese, &c., on Fridays and Wednesdays.

(4) You should confess your sins before the Priest.

(5) You should receive Holy Communion with purity, Holiness and a clear conscience.

(6) You should abstain from marital pleasures on Sundays, obligatory days and on fast days.

(7) You should pay the first fruits and other offerings to the church.

SIN

What is sin?

Sin is doing what we ought not to do and omitting what we ought to do.

Is there any difference in degree and kind in sin?

Yes. Since it is said in St. Luke 12 47-48 that "He that knew not and did commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes and that he knew and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with many stripes. It is clear that there is difference in degree of sin;

And since it is spoken (St. John 5 16) about "Sin unto death and sin not unto death" that there is difference in kind also.

THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES

What are the Chief virtues which should be found in man?

Charity, Faith and Hope are the Chief Virtues which should be found in man.

What are the corporal Virtues?

Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, taking in strangers, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, praying for those who suffer persecution for Christ's sake and burying the dead are the corporal virtues.

What are Spiritual Virtues?

Encouraging the faint hearted, teaching the ignorant, convincing sinners of their sins, forgiving them that trespass against us, pleading the cause of widows and orphans, praying for the quick and the dead, are the spiritual virtues.

What are the things which one should always remember?

One should remember about Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell.

HEAVEN

What is Heaven?

It is a place prepared by God for the righteous who love Him and keep His Commandments, and which the eye had not seen and ear not heard about 1Cor 2 9.

What will God say unto the righteous on the Judgment day?

He will say "come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" St. Mat. 25 34.

HELL

What is Hell?

It is a dark flaming ocean intended to torment the wicked who do not love God and keep His commandments.

What will He say to the wicked on the Judgment day?

He will say "Depart from me, ye cursed unto the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" St. Mat. 25 41.

THE HOLY BIBLE

How many parts are there in the Holy Bible?

There are two parts called the Old Testament and the New Testament.

How many divisions are there in the Old Testament?

Old Testament can be divided into three:

1. The pentatuch (the five books of Moses).
2. The Books of the Prophets.
3. Historical Books.

Are there any books omitted in the Old Testament edited by other denominations?

Yes. The following (Apocryptal) Books are omitted in it:

1. First and 2nd Macabees.
2. Judith (3) Tobias.
4. Baraceras (5) 2nd Esther.

How is the New Testament divided?

It is divided into: 1. The Four Gospels. 2. Acts of the Apostles. 3. Epistles of the Apostles. 4. The Revelation.

What books are omitted in the New Testament edited by Protestants?

The following books are omitted in the New Testament: 1. Epistles of St. Clement. 2. Dedachy of the App. Accepted by the church, but not in New Testament.

THE PATRIARCH

Who is the supreme head of Our Church?

The supreme Head of Our Church is Moran Mor Ignatius, the Patriarch of Antioch.

Where is His residence?

It is in Mardin, in the magnificent monastery called Kurkno Convent.

What is your duty towards His Holiness (the Patriarch) ?

As he is the supreme head of Our Church I must be obedient to all his Orders.

How can you fulfill this?

By being obedient to the Metropolitans, appointed by him.

THE HOLY SACRAMENTS

What is meant by Sacraments?

Sacraments are the (outward) Holy Ceremonies of the inward spiritual Graces, instituted by Our Lord for the salvation of mankind.

How many sacraments are there and what are they?

There are seven sacraments, viz:

(1) Holy Baptism. (2) Holy Chrism (Confirmation). (3) Holy Eucharist. (4) Holy Orders. (5) Holy Matrmiony. (6) Auricular confession. (7) Untion of the sick.

Of these sacraments which are obligatory?

All except Holy Orders and Holy Matrimony are obligatory. Notice. These two need be received only by those who will so.

HOLY BAPTISM

What is Holy Baptism?

Holy Baptism is a sacrament instituted by Our Lord to be received by one and all who enter the pale of Christian Church and it is a rebirth from spirit and water for salvation. St. John 3 7.

What are the Graces obtained from Holy Baptism?

The Graces obtained from Holy Baptism are: Sonship of God. Forgiveness of sins. Gift of Holy Spirit and Communion with the society of the Sons of God.

Can an Infant receive spiritual Grace and enter into a covenant with God?

Yes. An Infant can receive spiritual grace St. Luke 1 44 and can enter into a covenant with God.

Can anyone enter the kingdom of God without Baptism?

No. One cannot enter into the kingdom of God without Baptism. Because it is said that "except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God" St. John 3 5.

How are those who had true desire to be Baptized, but by mishaps prevented from it, considered?

Their true desire to be Baptized will be considered as Baptism itself. Rom. 4 3. 9th 21-26.

Is it only in Baptism that true desire is considered as equivalent to (action) enjoyment?

No. But in all sacraments necessary for Salvation if one truly desired and makes efforts to receive, but is prevented by mishaps, his faith in that Sacrament will be considered equivalent to enjoyment. James 2 23.

As it is decreed that one should believe and then receive Baptism, St. Mar. 16 16.

Is infant Baptism justifiable?

Yes. It is justifiable in the case of children of Christian parents; For the children are also heirs of the promises to the parents (Acts 2 39). Confession of faith before Baptism is necessary only in the case of non-Christians.

What is the necessity of a Godfather in Baptism?

The God-fathers are to confess the faith in the place of the children that are baptized and to teach them the true doctrines. But in the case of adults it is to show the earnestness of the Baptized.

Is the Baptism, conducted by heretics and by those who have no Apostolical succession, valid?

Those who are baptized by those who have no Apostolic succession should be baptized again. But those who are baptized by Heretics who have Apostolic succession need not be rebaptized, but need only to renounce their Heresy, and confess the true faith.

Is there difference between re-birth and repentance?

Yes. Re-birth takes place only once through water and spirit by Grace. But repentance is turning from sinful desires to Godly ways and that may be repeated often.

HOLY CHRISM

(Mooron)

What is Holy Chrism?

That is the Holy Oil used for the anointing with the Holy Spirit.

How do we get this Holy Oil!

This is consecrated either by His Holiness Moran Mor Ignatius the Patriarch of Antioch or by High Priests specially authorized and from them we get it.

For what purposes is Mooron used?

Besides being used in Baptism, it is used for the consecration of the Church, the Holy Altar and the Tablet.

N. B.

The Tablet is a wooden plank of superior quality or marble slab consecrated by a Metropolitan with Chrism for the chalice and paton to be placed on during the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

Is not the sacrament of confirmation necessary for us also as in the case of other Churches?

As was the practice of the early Church this sacrament is administered along with Baptism. As a last item of Baptism the priest anointing the candidate with Holy Mooron. Instead of this anointment other churches have the sacrament of confirmation.
What does the other Holy Oil (olive oil) used in Baptism indicate?

It indicates that the Baptized become eligible for Sonship of God and for Salvation through the sign stamped by the Oil.

HOLY EUCHARIST

(Kurbana)

What is Holy Eucharist?

It is the Divine Sacrifice we celebrate in which we commune with the Body and Blood of Our Lord, for the salvation, spiritual growth and forgiveness of sins.

How do the Bread and Wine used in the Holy Eucharist become the body and blood of Christ?

Since Christ "took bread and wine in His Hands and Blessed them and said "This is My Body and This is My Blood" (St. Mar. 14 22-24) when His ambassadors do so, though there is no material change, they become the Body and Blood through Grace by the Power of the Word.

If they are the Flesh and Blood should they not have the color and taste thereof?

No. It is not necessary for when God became man He kept concealed His God-head

in His manhood without any change; so also He can turn the Bread and Wine into His Body and Blood without change of color and taste.

As Christ has enjoined to celebrate the Eucharist in Remembrance of Him will it not be more remembrance only rather than being capable of forgiveness of sins?

Since Christ has said that it is for the forgiveness of sins (St. Matt. 26 28) there will be forgiveness of sins.

What all events in His ministry are remembered in the Eucharist?

The Eucharist reminds us of His Incarnation, Baptism, Passion, Cross, Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension and His second coming, etc., and shows that the sacrifice for the salvation of the world is fulfilled.

Is it necessary to celebrate the Holy Eucharist when there is none to communicate?

Since the Eucharist is a sacrifice the priest

can celebrate it for himself as well as for others, even though there is none else present.

How to receive Holy Communion?

We are to take part in the Holy Communion after confessing our sins and obtaining forgiveness and trusting in God not to sin any more.

What are we to pray when we partake of Holy Communion?

The sanctifying Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, are given to me for the forgiveness of trespasses and remission of my sins in both the worlds forever. Amen.

What will happen to him who receives the Holy Communion without true repentance and discrimination?

They will have damnation 1 Cor. 11 29 "For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto him, if he desern not the Body.

CONFESSION

What is confession?

Confession is a sacrament of repentance confessing our sins before the priests who are the ambassadors of Christ between God and man and entreating and receiving through them the forgiveness of sins.

Have the priests the authority to forgive sins?

Since Christ has promised unto His ministers that "Whosoever sins ye forgive they are forgiven unto them; whosoever sins ye retain they will be retained" they have the authority to forgive the sins of those who repent sincerely and to retain the sins of those who do not repent.

How can you believe that your sins are forgiven?

When you truly repent and do the penance imposed by the minister and the minister prays upon you, the prayer of absolution, you can believe that your sins are forgiven.

Has anybody confessed before and got himself absolved by Christ or His apostles?

Yes. Many sinners came unto Christ and confessed their sins and He forgave them and warned them not to sin any more. So also the Apostles forgave the sins of those who confessed their sins to them. John 5 14, Acts. 19 18.

HOLY ORDERS

What is meant by Holy ministry?

It is one of the sacraments and an office which confers upon the recipient Apostolic succession by the laying of hands to administer the sacraments, etc., of the Church.

Who are ministers?

The ministers are the guides who turn the worldly men to spiritual men and the carnal minded into Godly minded and who administer the sacraments of the Church.

Can any without valid ordination, perform the ceremonies that ought to be conducted by Priests?

No. Those who are not "elected and called by God even as was Aron "Heb. 5 4, and appointed through valid ordination, cannot perform any ceremony.

Can anybody preach in the Church without the laying of hands or permission from proper authority?

No. Nobody can preach in the Church without laying of hands or permission from proper authority. For it is about such people that God says "I sent not these prophets, yet they ran; I spake not unto them, yet they prophesied" Jer. 26 4 Nun: 16.

Can we take part in ceremonies conducted by ministers who lead lives unworthy of their office?

Yes, we can. Though ministers lead lives unworthy of their office until they are excommunicated by proper authorities we should not question the validity of their sacraments and should not refuse to partake in them.

St. Matthew 7 22-23 Mark 23 3.

HOLY MATRIMONY

What is Matrimony?

Matrimony is a sacrament which unites inseparably the man and the woman both spiritually and worldly and in which blessings and graces are entreated and obtained from God.

What does St. Paul say about Matrimony?

Heb. 13 4 "Let marriage be held in honor among all" and let their bed be undefiled" 1 Cor. 7 9. "But if they have not continency, let them marry for it is better to marry than to burn."

What is God's commandment about matrimony and what mystery underlies in it?

"From the beginning God made them male and female and the twain shall become one flesh" what God hath joined together let not man put asunder "Nat. 19 4, 5, 6." The betrothal between man and women is from the Lord "Prov. 19 14. Marriage takes place according to the will of God.

Are there any reasons by which the couple can be freed from their matrimonial alliance?

The matrimonial alliance can only be undone by death and by diseases which are either incurable or which make sexual union impossible.

THE HOLY UNCTION

What is the unction of the sick?

It is a sacrament administered for the curing of diseases and the remission of venial sins through prayer and unction with the Holy Oil.

What is the authority in the Bible for the ministers, to perform this sacrament?

"Is any among you sick, let him call for the elders, of the Church, and let them pray over him anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord" St. James 5 14.

Can it be administered only at the last moment?

No. Since it is intended not only for the remission of sins but also for the curing of diseases, it can be administered whenever one is laid up.

Those who slept in Christ.

What is our duty regarding the dead?

We are to pray, to celebrate the Eucharist, to fast, to give alms and to do other charitable deeds for the dead.

Are we to do these for all classes of the dead?

No. We are to do these only for the faithful who are baptized and who have partaken of the Holy Communion. We should not do these good deeds for the Heretics and the unbelievers.

How can our prayers, etc., profit the Holy men who are dead in Christ, and who are already heirs to the kingdom of Heaven?

By Holy men we do not mean the canonized saints, but only believers in general, just as the Sun, Moon and the Stars, which though all emit light, differ in their glories, there is difference in the Glory of the dead at the time of resurrections; 1 Cor. 15 41-42; and since the sanctification of the soul does not cease with death (and there is only Christ who is free from sin) their souls are sanctified and grow from glory to glory through our prayers, etc.

How can the dead be profited by our prayers and other charitable deeds done for them? In so far as one's salvation or damnation will be in accordance with one's deeds, and action ceases with death?

Though their time of action is over, the period of grace extends until judgment and so they can obtain merits through grace even after death.

What do we learn about the dead from the life and work of Our Lord who is the perfect example in everything?

Since the sacrifice, intercession, fasting, etc., of Christ were intended for all the dead, from the first parents, Adam and Eve, and also for the generations to come, we also are expected to follow the same example.

The saints who slept in Our Lord.

What is our duty toward the Saints?

Since they are the friends of Christ and they begot us in spirit, we are to revere them and to celebrate their feasts, to take refuge in their intercessions and to walk in their footsteps.

How are we profited by the invocation of Saints?

Since the Saints live in Paradise and praise God like the Angels, and desire and pray for our salvation and since they spent their lives for Christ, they will pray for us when we invoke them and for their sakes God will have great mercy on us.

Why do we revere and respect the Saints?

We respect them as the friends of God, not as His equals and that shows our respect and love for our Lord—St. Matt. 10 40-41.

Are the saints aware of the things that happen on earth? Can they hear our prayers?

They can know the things that happen on earth 1 Sam. 28 19 and can hear our prayers 1 Cor. 6 2.

Since Christ is the only mediator are we not belittling His authority, when we invoke other mediators?

No. We do not pray to other Mediators except through Christ. Even the Apostle who taught about the single mediator sought for other mediators to pray for him. 1 Thess. 5 21. Rom. 15 30 if the mediation through the saints is rejecting Christ, then the Mediation through the living is also rejecting Christ's mediation.

THE HOLY CROSS

What is the Holy Cross?

It is a sign in the shape of a Cross, with stone, wood or metal, intended to remind us of the crucification of Christ which is our way of Salvation.

By adoring and bowing before the cross are we not violating the 2nd commandment and practising idolatry?

No. Idoltary is the worship of a thing intended to represent God. We do not worship the Cross as God. We only honor and adore it because it was the weapon used for our salvation, and we only worship Christ in front of it remembering His passion on the Cross.

Why do we observe the feast of the Cross?

We do so, since Constantine, the great, defeated his enemies with the sign of the cross, which he saw in a vision, and being instructed, he sent his mother Helena to Jerusalem to find out the Holy Cross. She found out 3 crosses out of which she selected the Holy one by laying over a dead man who rose at once. We celebrate the feast in remembrance of the revelation of the Lord's Cross.

Can the dead come to life by touching the Cross which is only a piece of wood?

If the dead rose up by touching the bone of Elijah and those on whom the shadow of St. Peter was cast and those who touched the apron and towel of St. Paul, were healed, it is quite possible that the dead can resurrect by touching the Holy Cross.

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